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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ISLAMABAD 001165

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER GILANI DISCUSSES SWAT, IDPS AND
U.S. ASSISTANCE WITH CODEL CARPER

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson for reasons 1.4 (b) (d)

11. (C) Summary: In his meeting with Codel Carper on May 26, Prime Minister Gilani provided an update on the military's progress fighting militants in Swat and on GOP efforts to care for the approximately 2 million internally-displaced persons (IDPs) affected by the fighting. He requested the U.S. pay the balance of the mid-life upgrades for their F-16s, expedite repayment for Pakistani contributions to the war through the Coalition Support Fund, and release a remaining \$410 million from the original \$1.5 billion in fiscal year 2009 Foreign Military Financing appropriation. End Summary.

Fighting Militants in Malakand...

12. (C) Prime Minister Gilani led off a meeting on May 26th with Senator Thomas Carper and his delegation by noting that democracy was taking root in Pakistan, even in Northwest Frontier Province and Balochistan, where the federal government has good relations with the parties in the provincial governments, which makes working in the tribal areas easier. However, he argued, the situation is complicated by the long border Pakistan shares with Afghanistan, the mountainous terrain, and the difficulty in preventing unauthorized cross-border movement. Pakistan has a strong interest in developing biometric systems to help manage border crossings, but Afghanistan had resisted, he said. The GOP will continue to press President Karzai on this issue.

13. (C) Turning to operations against the militants in Malakand, Gilani said that the peace deal signed with the militants had given the GOP the moral high ground. It had been aimed at restoration of peace in the region, but was contingent on the taliban laying down their arms and respecting the government's authority. But, he stated, the Taliban had challenged the writ of the government, threatened the provincial government and members of parliament, and bombed girls schools and other infrastructure. "There was no other option but military action and the public now supports military action," he argued.

14. (C) In recent days, the military has reclaimed about 90% of the territory held by militants in Swat, including the main city of Mingora, he stated. The remaining 10% will take a couple weeks to clean up, he suggested, citing the need to avoid civilian casualties in these populated areas. The GOP had requested the taliban to surrender, but regardless they will be eliminated. "No matter how much time it takes, we

have to fight to the last," he stated. With additional U.S. troops entering Afghanistan, we need to cooperate to prevent more militants from entering Pakistan, he offered. Gilani requested more defense and intelligence cooperation, especially actionable information.

While Supporting IDPs

¶5. (C) In addition to the military campaign, the government also is addressing the rising population of people displaced by the fighting, Gilani said. He argued for quick action to avoid suffering, saying that Pakistan "needs to win the hearts and minds of these people, too." He stated that approximately 2 million people had been displaced, 80% of whom were staying with relatives and the remaining 20% residing in IDP camps. But the camps are in the Punjabi plains and therefore very hot, he said, and the government needs to settle Malakand so the IDPs can return home soon.

¶6. (C) The government is currently focused on providing water, electricity, and medical facilities for the IDP camps, he said. Lt. General Nadeem, who oversaw GOP relief operations in the earthquake-affected areas in 2005, has been placed in charge. Many agencies are working to assist the IDPs and there is good coordination with the provincial government. Gilani said he had visited some of the camps himself and spoken directly with IDPs.

¶7. (C) Gilani said that the government was formulating plans to return government writ in Swat and surrounding areas. He

ISLAMABAD 00001165 002 OF 003

stated that he had enlisted some 44 officials, including 9 women, with significant management experience to help with resettling IDPs and strengthening law enforcement agencies in the region. He did not offer a timeline for when these officials would begin work.

U.S. Assistance

¶8. (C) Senator Carper thanked the Prime Minister for his briefing on Swat and IDPs, and asked how the United States can assist in the effort. Senator Carper offered three potential areas of assistance. First, the U.S. could increase its assistance with resettling of IDPs. Second, the U.S. could play a more proactive role in encouraging India to engage with Pakistan on Kashmir. And third, noting that Pakistan may have just 5-15 military transport helicopters operational at any one time, the U.S. could provide maintenance training for Pakistani helicopter technicians.

¶9. (C) Responding to Senator Carper's suggestions, Lt. Gen. (ret) Ali agreed that Pakistan needs better troop mobility, especially transport helicopters. Pakistan is upgrading its maintenance facilities and has already requested additional spare parts. In case the GOP needs U.S. assistance on maintenance, they will let us know, he said. He also said that acquisition of spare parts, no longer in production, for Cobra helicopters needed to be resolved. One idea that had been raised previously, he suggested, was for U.S. and NATO transport helicopters based in Afghanistan to be brought for repairs to maintenance facilities in Pakistan, instead of being shipped to Japan or elsewhere. (Comment: This idea was raised previously with ODRP Chief, but the maintenance facilities in question are not certified. End comment.)

¶10. (C) Gilani noted that Pakistan is still seeking U.S. support for the balance of the F-16 mid-life upgrades and said that the F-16s are being used heavily in counter-terrorism operations. Senator Carper inquired how the F-16s are being used, since the aircraft is primarily a tactical air-to-air fighter and therefore not as well-suited for operations against small ground targets. Lt. Gen. (ret) Ali replied that the F-16s were being used in pinpoint

attacks on hardened shelters used by the militants for storage and ammunition. These shelters are in treacherous mountain areas not easily accessed by Cobras or Special Services Groups (SSGs). The F-16s use precision-guided munitions (PGMs) to soften up these targets and then the SSGs and Cobras follow. About 1400 PGMs had been used to date, he said, and Pakistan is running out of stock.

¶11. (C) The Prime Minister complained that Pakistan is still waiting for the Coalition Support Fund reimbursement for costs associated with its contribution to coalition operations in Afghanistan. Ambassador replied that Pakistan should receive payment of approximately \$480 million by the end of the week. Lt. Gen. (ret) Ali also noted that \$410 million of the \$1.5 billion Foreign Military Financing fiscal year 2009 appropriation would soon terminate and should be released immediately. (Comment: Post is working to clarify the figures with the Ministry of Defense. End Comment).

¶12. (C) Senator Udall thanked Prime Minister Gilani for his hospitality. He noted that this was his second visit to Pakistan; the first visit was to climb Nanga Parbat 20 years ago. The teamwork needed to climb a mountain should be replicated in counterinsurgency operations, he said. Gilani replied that the nation is united at the moment behind the war and that it was "now or never" if Pakistan is to defeat the militants.

¶13. (C) Present in the meeting in addition to Ambassador were: Senators Thomas Carper (D-DE), Mark Udall (D-CO), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Kay Hagan (D-NC), and Mark Begich (D-AK). Also attending were: Wendy Anderson, Professional Staff for the Senate Homeland Security Committee; Chad Kreikemeier, Foreign Policy Legislative Advisor to Senator Shaheen; Mike Harney, Legislative Director for Senator Hagan; Jennifer Barrett, National Security Advisor to Senator Udall; and James Delap, Defense Fellow with Senator Begich. From GOP: Defense Minister Chaudhry Ahmed Mukhtar, Interior Minister Rehman Malik, Senator Syeda Sughra Imam, Defense

ISLAMABAD 00001165 003 OF 003

Secretary Lt. Gen. (ret) Syed Ather Ali, Acting Foreign Secretary Khalid Aziz Babar, MFA Additional Secretary for the Americas Attiya Mehmood, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Nargis Sethi, Additional Secretary to the Prime Minister Abdul Malik Abdullah, Military Secretary to the Prime Minister Brig. Nasir Dilawar Shah, and Press Secretary Imran Ghardazi.

¶14. (U) Codel Carper did not clear this message.
PATTERSON